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**RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION**

**CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTIONS OF
RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE**

**Joint written statement* submitted by the International Humanist and Ethical Union
(IHEU), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, and the
Association for World Education, and the Association of World Citizens,
non-governmental organizations on the Roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 February 2006]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Calls to Kill in the name of God or Religion

1. The legitimacy of the use of violence and acts of terrorism in the name of Islam is the subject of continuing debate within the Islamic world. The debate, which is clearly divisive, turns on interpretations of the concept of Jihad when carried out as “Holy War.”

2. It is significant that persons close to those who carried out the London bombings on 7 July 2005 and the earlier attacks in Madrid, as well as other terror attacks, claimed that they did so in the name of Jihad.

3. On 18 July 2005, following the London bombing, a fatwa was issued by the British Muslim Forum and approved by 500 UK Muslim clerics, scholars and imams. It stated *inter alia* that: “Islam strictly, strongly and severely condemns the use of violence and the destruction of innocent lives... Such acts, as perpetrated in London, are crimes against humanity and contrary to the teachings of Islam.”¹

4. In order to analyse certain aspects of this debate within the Islamic tradition, three NGOs – the Association for World Education (AWE), International Humanitarian and Ethical Union (IHEU) and Association of World Citizens (AWC) – organised a Parallel One-Day NGO Conference on 18 April 2005 at the 61st session of the Commission, entitled: ‘Victims of Jihad: Muslims, Dhimmis, Apostates, and Women.’ The conference analysed the history and current understanding of Jihad within Islam, and the devastating impact of the ideology of Jihad on its victims. The speakers included historians, writers, and human rights defenders. Their presentations included:

- A background historical analysis of Jihad by Dutch academic Johannes J.G. Jansen of Utrecht University; and an analysis by Caroline Fourest, French author on religious extremism.
- An analysis of *The Culture of ‘Jihad and Martyrdom’ in Egyptian school textbooks*, and *The Culture of Hate in Saudi Arabian textbooks* by David G. Littman;
- *Negationism* by Bat Ye’or, expert on Jihad, dhimmis, dhimmitude and ‘Eura bia’
- The treatment of Apostasy in Islamic law and its inconsistency with International Human Rights Instruments by Ibn Warraq;
- *Women in Islam* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Dutch Parliamentarian, author of “Submission,” a TV film produced with Theo van Gogh, who was murdered in an Amsterdam street in November 2004 by a fanatical Muslim.
- Personal testimonies by Taslima Nasrin, Bangladeshi exiled writer; Azam Kamguian, Iranian writer and women’s rights activist; Hamouda F. Bella, Sudanese Muslim human rights activist; and Simon Deng, Sudanese Christian former slave.²

5. Dr. Ahmad Abu Matar, a Palestinian academic living in Oslo, in a statement published on a website one day before the NGO Conference, argued that many Muslims in Europe foster conflict instead of coexistence and they are being influenced by extremist fundamentalist brands of Islam – and moderate Muslims are not speaking out adequately against this activity.³

6. On 8 July, the day after the London carnage, Amir Taheri – reputed author and columnist for the London Arab daily, *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* – made a crucial point: “Until we hear the voices of Muslims condemning attacks with no words such as ‘but’ and ‘if,’ the suicide bombers and the murderers will have an excuse to think that they enjoy the support

*of all Muslims. The real battle against the enemy of mankind will begin when the 'silent majority' in the Islamic world makes its voice heard against the murderers, and against those who brainwash them, and fund them."*⁴

7. A similar view was presented in the same newspaper a day later when AlArabiya TV Director-General Abd Al-Rahman Al-Rashed wrote, under the title, "Expel Extremism Today":

*"For over 10 years now, I myself and other Arab writers have warned against the dangers of the reckless handling of the extremism that is now spreading like a plague within the British community. (...) Like many other diseases, extremism is a contagious one. (...) The British authority's leniency regarding fundamentalist fascism has allowed many, including Arab and Muslim intellectuals and journalists, to adopt ideologies that promote extremism and defend criminals such as bin Laden and Al-Zarqawi. The situation has escalated to the extent that Arab and Muslim intellectuals fear the repercussions of condemning extremists. The battle we face is against the ideology, as opposed to against the terrorists themselves. (...) The time has come for British authorities to deal harshly with extremism, before complete chaos is un-leashed onto British society. In the past, we talked about stopping them. Now, it is time to expel."*⁵

8. The ideology to which AlRashed refers is often expressed by Islamists extolling the legitimacy of violence. Among many examples: on 30 December 2002, before the war in Iraq began, the then Hamas leader Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi posted a Hamas website Appeal for Muslims to flood Iraq with 'martyr -*shahid*' bombers. It stated: *"The enemies of Allah...crave life while the Muslims crave martyrdom. The martyrdom operations that shock can ensure that horror is sowed in the [enemies'] hearts – and horror is one of the causes of defeat."*⁶ This widely-propagated call by the Hamas leader over the internet was taken very seriously and many young men – encouraged also by Al-Qaeda – poured into Iraq in order to perform 'Jihad in the path of Allah.'

9. Unfortunately, the concept of deliberately sacrificing one's life while killing infidels and those targeted as Muslim 'apostates' – including any collateral bystanders – is sanctioned by tradition and currently revived in *fatwas* by several Islamic religious authorities.⁷

10. The 1988 Hamas Charter, co-authored by the late Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi embodies Jihadist interpretations of Islam. Article 8 of the Hamas charter, borrowed from the Muslim Brotherhood Charter of 1928, has since become the blueprint for global terror. It declares: *"Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its Constitution; Jihad is its path, and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes."*⁸

11. Regrettably, this and other extremist Jihadist interpretations of Islam have been approved by several Muslim clerics worldwide, including Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradhwani (head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, president of the International Association of Muslim scholars (IAMS) and spiritual guide of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic groups).

12. Speaking on Qatar TV 25 February 2006. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradhwani made his position clear:

“We are fighting in the name of religion, in the name of Islam, which makes this Jihad an individual duty, in which the entire nation takes part, and whoever is killed in this [Jihad] is a martyr. This is why I ruled that martyrdom operations are permitted, because he commits martyrdom for the sake of Allah, and sacrifices his soul for the sake of Allah.”⁹

13. There are also those who are not willing to offer a definitive opinion on the question of the legitimacy of violence within Islam. It has been argued that those who issue *fatwas* to kill innocent people in the name of Islam are not true Muslims and should be treated as apostates. But on 6 July 2005, a day before the London bombing, a major conference of 170 Muslim scholars from forty countries meeting in Amman, Jordan provided an opinion in a Final Communiqué: *“It is not possible to declare as apostates any group of Muslims who believes in Allah the Mighty and Sublime and His Messenger (may Peace and Blessings be upon him) and the pillars of faith, and respects the pillars of Islam and does not deny any necessary article of religion.”*¹⁰

14. From the above opinion, it is clear that according to some of the most influential voices in the Islamic world, Muslims who perform terrorist attacks in the path of jihad remain Muslims however reprehensible their actions.

15. In several statements to the Commission and Sub-Commission, IHEU, AWE and other NGOs have called upon the Commission and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to condemn unequivocally those who kill or who call on others to kill in the name of God or religion. We regret that the OIC and the Commission has thus far failed to respond to these calls.

16. We continue to believe that such a condemnation by the Commission and the OIC would encourage other Muslim organisations to speak out against the terrorists and extremists and would have a salutary effect in dissuading potential terrorists from carrying out further outrageous attacks in the name of Jihad.

17. We again call on the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Arab League, and individual Muslim religious, cultural and political leaders to join in an unambiguous condemnation of those who defame Islam by calls to kill in the name of Allah, or of Islam. We respectfully suggest that the OIC have an urgent responsibility to include such a condemnation in the resolution: *Combating defamation of religions* which they have co-sponsored at the Commission since 1999.

18. We also call once again on the Commission to adopt a clear resolution or – failing that – a Chairman’s statement, in which any call to kill, to terrorise, or to use violence in the name of God, or of any religion, is condemned without qualification.

¹ BBC NEWS:<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk/4697365.stm>. Published: 2005/07/19 15:41:43 GMT

² http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?b=5&se=7&t=7

³ <http://www.elaph.com> (17 April 2005)

<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP92105>

MEMRI, Special Dispatch Series – No. 921, 10 June 2005. Reproduced: E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/NGO/4. See also,

for further references, written statements: E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/NGO/2 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/NGO/3.

⁴ Amir Taheri, *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* (London), 7 July 2005, translation in MEMRI Special Report, 8 July 2005 N° 36: <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR3605>, Arab Media Reactions to London Bombings: “A Chapter in World War III”. Also Amir Taheri: “And this is why they do it”, in *TimesOnline* (London), 8 July 2005.

⁵ *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* (London), 9 July 2005. MEMRI: Special Report - Jihad & Terrorism, 12 July 2005, No. 37 (Arab and Iranian Media Reactions to the London Bombing-Part II: “The Attacks Were Anticipated Due to British Leniency to Extremists Acting in Britain”/“Expel Extremism Today”): <http://memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=SR3705>

⁶ MEMRI, Special Dispatch Series – No. 457, 9 January 2003, English trans., “ Hamas spokesman: Iraq must Establish a Suicide Army”: <http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/palestoday/readers/articles/rantisi/20-12-02.htm> See, Raphael Israeli, *Islamikaze: Manifestations of Islamic Martyrology* (London /Portland, OR: Cass, 2003).

⁷ Extracts reproduced in E/CN/Sub.2/2004/NGO/25*. See also E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/NGO/26, for references to Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hizbullah, and AlQaeda.

⁸ English transl. on the web. See: www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/hamas.htm

⁹ MEMRI Special Dispatch – Jihad & Terrorism Studies Project, No. 1102, Qatar TV, 25 February 2006, www.memri.org/bin/opener_latest.cgi?ID=SD110206

¹⁰ “Islam struggles to stake out its position,” by Judea Pearl, *International Herald Tribune*, 20 July 2005, p. 8. This article appeared in the *Boston Globe*. King Abdullah’s conference address is at: www.MaximsNews.com. In this specific context, see also the report by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (Center for Special Studies / C.S.S.), entitled: “Islamic Legitimacy for the London Bombings,” dated 20 July 2005, prepared, edited and translated by Reuven Paz, Director and Editor of the Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PPISM): www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/7_05/london_b.htm